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THOUGHTS
ON THE
INDEPENDENCE of AMERICA,
&c. &c.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

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THOUGHTS
ON THE
PEACE,
AND THE
PROBABLE ADVANTAGES THEREOF
TO THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
A NEW EDITION.

By THOMAS PAINE,
AUTHOR OF THE WORKS ENTITLED, "RIGHTS OF MAN,"
"COMMON SENSE," "A LETTER TO THE ABBE RAYNAL,"
AND "A LETTER TO LORD SHELBURNE."

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THOUGHTS,

&c. &c.

“THE times that tried men’s souls*” are over—and the greatest and completest Revolution the world ever knew, is gloriously and happily accomplished.

BUT, to pass from the extremes of danger to safety—from the tumult of war to the tranquillity of peace, though sweet in contemplation, requires a gradual composure of the senses to receive it. Even calmness has the power of stunning, when it opens too in-

* “These are the times that try men’s souls.”

Crisis, No. 1, published Dec. 19, 1776.

stantly

stantly upon us. The long and raging hurricane that should cease in a moment, would leave us in a state rather of wonder than enjoyment; and some moments of recollection must pass, before we could be capable of tasting the full felicity of repose. There are but few instances in which the mind is fitted for sudden transitions; it takes in its pleasures by reflection and comparison, and those must have time to act, before the relish for new scenes is complete.

IN the present case—the mighty magnitude of the object—the various uncertainties of fate it has undergone—the numerous and complicated dangers we have suffered or escaped—the eminence we now stand on, and the vast prospect before us, must all conspire to impress us with contemplation.

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To see it in our power to make a world happy—to teach mankind the art of being so—to exhibit on the theatre of the universe a character hitherto unknown—and to have, as it were, a new creation entrusted to our hands, are honours that command reflection, and can neither be too highly estimated, nor too gratefully received.

IN this pause then of recollection—while the storm is ceasing, and the long-agitated mind vibrating to a rest, let us look back on the scenes we have passed, and learn from experience what is yet to be done.

NEVER, I say, had a country so many openings to happiness as this. Her setting out into life, like the rising of a fair morning, was unclouded and promising. Her cause was good; her principles just and liberal;

beral; her temper serene and firm; her conduct regulated by the nicest steps of order; and every thing about her wore the mark of honour.

IT is not every country (perhaps there is not another in the world) that can boast so fair an origin. Even the first settlement of America corresponds with the character of the Revolution. Rome, once the proud mistress of the universe, was originally a band of ruffians. Plunder and rapine made her rich, and her oppression of millions made her great. But America needs never be ashamed to tell her birth, nor relate the stages by which she rose to empire.

THE remembrance, then, of what is past, if it operates rightly, must inspire her with the most laudable of all ambition, that of
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adding to the fair fame she began with. The world has seen her great in adversity; struggling, without a thought of yielding, beneath accumulated difficulties; bravely, nay proudly, encountering distress, and rising in resolution as the storm increased. All this is justly due to her, for her fortitude has merited the character. Let, then, the world see that she can bear prosperity; and that her honest virtue in time of peace, is equal to the bravest virtue in time of war.

SHE is now descending to the scenes of quiet and domestic life; not beneath the cypress shade of disappointment, but to enjoy in her own land, and under her own vine, the sweets of her labours, and the reward of her toil. In this situation, may she never forget, that a fair national reputation

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is of as much importance as independence; that it possesses a charm which wins upon the world, and makes even enemies civil; that it gives a dignity which is often superior to power, and commands a reverence where pomp and splendor fail.

It would be a circumstance ever to be lamented, and never to be forgotten, were a single blot, from any cause whatever, suffered to fall on a Revolution, which, to the end of time, must be an honour to the age that accomplished it; and which has contributed more to enlighten the world, and diffuse a spirit of freedom and liberality among mankind, than any human event (if this can be called one) that ever preceded it.

It is not among the least of the calamities of a long-continued war, that it unhinges

the mind from those nice sensations which at other times appear so amiable. The continual spectacle of woe blunts the finer feelings, and the necessity of bearing with the sight renders it familiar. In like manner are many of the moral obligations of society weakened, till the custom of acting by necessity, becomes an apology where it is truly a crime. Yet let but a nation conceive rightly of its character, and it will be chastely just in protecting it. None ever began with a fairer than America, and none can be under a greater obligation to preserve it.

THE Debt which America has contracted, compared with the Cause she has gained, and the advantages to flow from it, ought scarcely to be mentioned. She has it in her choice to do, and to live, as happily as she pleases. The world is in her hands. She has now

no Foreign Power to monopolize her Commerce, perplex her Legislation, or controul her Prosperity. The struggle is, over which must one day have happened, and, perhaps, never could have happened at a better time*; and instead of a domineering Master, she has gained an Ally, whose exemplary greatness, and

* That the Revolution began at the exact period of time best fitted to the purpose, is sufficiently proved by the event.— But the great hinge on which the whole machine turned, is the *Union of the States*; and this Union was naturally produced by the inability of any one State to support itself against a foreign enemy, without the assistance of the rest.

Had the States severally been less able than they were when the war began, their united strength would not have been equal to the undertaking, and they must, in all human probability, have failed.—And on the other hand, had they severally been more able, they might not have seen, or, what is more, might not have felt the necessity of uniting; and, either by attempting to stand alone, or in small confederacies, would have been separately conquered.

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and universal liberality, have extorted a confession even from her enemies.

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Now, as we cannot see a time (and many years must pass away before it can arrive) when the strength of any one State, or of several united, can be equal to the whole of the present United States; and as we have seen the extreme difficulty of collectively prosecuting the war to a successful issue, and preserving our national importance in the world; therefore, from the experience we have had, and the knowledge we have gained, we must, unless we make a waste of wisdom, be strongly impressed with the advantage, as well as the necessity, of strengthening the happy Union, which has been our salvation, and without which we should have been a ruined people.

While I was writing this note, I cast my eye on the pamphlet *Common Sense*, from which I shall make an extract, as it applies exactly to the case. It is as follows:

" I have never met with a man, either in England or
" America, who hath not confessed his opinion, that a separation between the countries would take place one time or
" other; and there is no instance in which we have shewn
" less judgement, than endeavouring to describe, what
" we call, the ripeness or fitness of the Continent for
" Independence.

" As all men allow the measure, and differ only in their
" opinion of the time, let us, in order to remove mistakes,

"take

WITH the blessings of Peace, Independence, and an universal Commerce, the States, individually and collectively, will have leisure and opportunity to regulate and establish their domestic concerns, and to put it beyond the power of calumny to throw the least reflection on their honour. Character is much easier kept than recovered; and that man, if any such there be, who, from any sinister views, or littleness of soul, lends unseen his hand to injure it, con-

“ take a general survey of things, and endeavour, if possible, to find out the *very time*. But we need not go far; the enquiry ceases at once, for *the time hath found us*. The general concurrence, the glorious union of all things, prove the fact.

“ It is not in numbers, but in an Union, that our great strength lies. The Continent is just arrived at that pitch of strength, in which no single colony is able to support itself, and the whole, when united, can accomplish the matter: and either more or less than this, might be fatal in its effects.”

Pamphlet, Common Sense.

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trives a wound it will never be in his power to heal.

As we have established an Inheritance for Posterity, let that Inheritance descend with every mark of an honourable conveyance. The little it will cost, compared with the worth of the States, the greatness of the object, and the value of national character, will be a profitable exchange. < .

BUT that which must more forcibly strike a thoughtful penetrating mind, and which includes and renders easy all inferior concerns, is the *Union of the States*. On this our great national character depends. It is this which must give us importance abroad and security at home. It is through this only that we are, or can be nationally known in the world. It is the flag of the
United

United States which renders our ships and commerce safe on the seas, or in a foreign port. Our Mediterranean passes must be obtained under the same style. All our treaties, whether of alliance, peace, or commerce, are formed under the Sovereignty of the United States, and Europe knows us by no other name or title.

THE division of the Empire into States is for our own convenience, but abroad this distinction ceases. The affairs of each State are local. They can go no farther than to itself; and were the whole worth of even the richest of them expended in revenue, it would not be sufficient to support Sovereignty against a foreign attack. In short, we have no other national sovereignty than as United States. It would even be fatal for

us if we had—too expensive to be maintained, and impossible to be supported. Individuals, or Individual States, may call themselves what they please; but the world, and especially the world of enemies, is not to be held in awe by the whistling of a name. Sovereignty must have power to protect all the parts which compose and constitute it: and as *United States*, we are equal to the importance of the title, but otherwise we are not. Our Union, well and wisely regulated and cemented, is the cheapest way of being great—the easiest way of being powerful—and the happiest invention in government which the circumstances of America can admit of; because it collects from each State, that which, by being inadequate, can be of no use to it, and forms an aggregate that serves for all.

THE States of Holland are an unfortunate instance of the effects of individual sovereignty. Their disjointed condition exposes them to numerous intrigues, losses, calamities, and enemies, and the almost impossibility of bringing their measures to a decision; and that decision into execution, is to them, and would be to us, a source of endless misfortune.

IT is with confederate States as with individuals in society: something must be yielded up, to make the whole secure. In this view of things we gain by what we give, and draw an annual interest greater than the capital. I ever feel myself hurt, when I hear the Union, that great palladium of our liberty and safety, the least irreverently spoken of. It is the most sacred thing in the constitution of America, and that which every
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man should be the most proud and tender of. Our citizenship in the United States is our national character: our citizenship in any particular State is only our local distinction. By the latter we are known at home; by the former to the world. Our great title is *Americans*; our inferior one varies with the place.

So far as my endeavours could go, they have all been directed to conciliate the affections, unite the interests, and draw and keep the mind of the country together; and the better to assist in this foundation-work of the Revolution, I have avoided all places of profit or office, either in the State I live in, or in the United States; kept myself at a distance from all parties and party connections, and even disregarded all private and inferior con-

cerns: and when we take into view the great work we have gone through, and feel, as we ought to feel, the just importance of it, we shall then see, that the little wranglings and indecent contentions of personal party, are as dishonourable to our characters, as they are injurious to our repose.

It was the cause of America that made me an author. The force with which it struck my mind, and the dangerous condition the country appeared to me in, by courting an impossible and unnatural reconciliation with those who were determined to reduce her, instead of striking out into the only line that could cement and save her, *A Declaration of Independence*—made it impossible for me, feeling as I did, to be silent: and if, in the course of more than seven years, I have rendered
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her any service, I have likewise added something to the reputation of literature, by freely and disinterestedly employing it in the great cause of mankind, and shewing there may be genius without prostitution.

INDEPENDENCE always appeared to me practicable and probable, provided the sentiment of the country could be formed and held to the object: and there is no instance in the world, where a people so extended, and wedded to former habits of thinking, and under such a variety of circumstances, were so instantly and effectually pervaded, by a turn in politics, as in the case of Independence, and who supported their opinion, undiminished, through such a succession of good and ill fortune, till they crowned it with success.

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BUT as the scenes of war are closed, and every man preparing for home and happier times, I therefore take my leave of the subject. I have most sincerely followed it from beginning to end, and through all its turns and windings; and whatever country I may hereafter be in, I shall always feel an honest pride at the part I have taken and acted, and a gratitude to Nature and Providence for putting it in my power to be of some use to mankind.

Philadelphia, April 19, 1783.

A P P E N -

A P P E N D I X.

THE two following Letters were first published in England in the Morning Post.

TO THE AUTHORS OF THE REPUBLICAN.

GENTLEMEN,

M. DUCHASTELET has mentioned to me the intention of some persons to commence a Work under the title of *The Republican*.

As I am a Citizen of a country which knows no other Majesty than that of the People—no other Government than that of the Representative body—no other Sovereignty than that of the Laws, and which is attached to *France* both by Alliance and by Gratitude, I voluntarily offer you my services in support of principles, as honourable to a nation, as they are adapted to promote the happiness of mankind. I offer them to you with the more zeal, as I know the moral, literary, and political character of those who are engaged in the undertaking,

undertaking, and find myself honoured in their good opinion.

But I must at the same time observe, that from my ignorance of the French language, my works must necessarily undergo a translation; they can of course be but of little utility, and my offering must consist more of witnes than services—I must add, that I am obliged to pass a part of this summer in England and Ireland.

As the public has done me the unmerited favour of recognizing me under the appellation of “Common Sense,” which is my usual signature, I shall continue it in this publication, to avoid mistakes, and to prevent my being supposed the author of works not my own. As to my Political Principles, I shall endeavour, in this letter, to trace their general features in such a manner, as that they cannot be misunderstood.

It is desirable, in most instances, to avoid that which may give even the least suspicion with respect to the part meant to be adopted; and particularly on the present occasion, where a perfect clearness of expression is necessary to the avoidance of any possible misinterpretation. I am happy, therefore, to find, that the work in question is entitled “*The Republican*.” This word expresses perfectly the idea which we ought to have of Government in general—*Res Publica*—The public affairs of a Nation.

As to the word *Monarchy*, though the address and intrigue of Courts have rendered it familiar, it does not contain the less of reproach or of insult to a nation. The word, in its immediate and original sense, signifies *the absolute Power of a single Individual*, who may prove a fool, an hypocrite, or a tyrant. The appellation admits of no other interpretation than that which is here given. *France* is therefore not a *Monarchy*; it is insulted when called by that name. The servile spirit which characterises this species of Government, is banished from *FRANCE*; and this country, like *AMERICA*, can now afford to *Monarchy* no more than a glance of disdain.

Of the errors which monarchic ignorance or knavery has spread through the world; the one, which bears the marks of the most dexterous invention, is the opinion that the system of *Republicanism* is only adapted to a small country, and that a *Monarchy* is suited, on the contrary, to those of greater extent. Such is the language of Courts, and such the sentiments which they have caused to be adopted in monarchic countries; but the opinion is contrary at the same time to principle and to experience.

The Government, to be of real use, should possess a complete knowledge of all the parties—all the circumstances, and all the interests of a nation. The monarchic system, in consequence, in-

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stead of being suited to a country of great extent, would be more admissible in a small territory, where an individual may be supposed to know the affairs and the interests of the whole. But when it is attempted to extend this individual knowledge to the affairs of a great country, the capacity of knowing bears no longer any proportion to the extent or multiplicity of the objects which ought to be known, and the Government inevitably falls from ignorance into tyranny. For the proof of this position we need only look to SPAIN, RUSSIA, GERMANY, TURKEY, and the whole of the Eastern Continent—Countries for the deliverance of which I offer my most sincere wishes.

On the contrary, the true *Republican* system, by Election and Representation, offers the only means which are known, and in my opinion the only means which are possible of proportioning the wisdom and the information of a Government to the extent of a country.

The system of *Representation* is the strongest and most powerful center that can be devised for a nation. Its attraction acts so powerfully, that men give it their approbation even without reasoning on the cause; and FRANCE, however distant its several parts, finds itself at this moment *an Whole* in its *central* Representation. The citizen is assured that his rights are protected, and the soldier feels that he is no longer the Slave of a Despot,
but

but that he is become one of the Nation, and interested of course in its defence.

The states at present styled *Republican*, as HOLLAND, GENOA, VENICE, BERNE, &c. are not only unworthy of the name, but are actually in opposition to every Principle of a *Republican* Government; and the countries submitted to their power are, truly speaking, subjected to an *Aristocratic* Slavery!

It is, perhaps, impossible in the first steps which are made in a Revolution, to avoid all kind of error in principle or in practice, or in some instances to prevent the combination of both. Before the sense of a nation is sufficiently enlightened, and before men have entered into the habits of a free communication with each other of their natural thoughts, a certain reserve—a timid prudence seizes on the human mind, and prevents it from attaining its level, with that vigour and promptitude which belongs to *Right*.—An example of this influence discovers itself in the commencement of the present Revolution: but happily this discovery has been made before the Constitution was completed, and in time to provide a remedy.

The *Hereditary Succession* can never exist as a matter of *right*; it is a *nullity*—a *nothing*. To admit the idea, is to regard men as a species of property belonging to some individuals, either born or to be born! It is to consider our descendents,

and all posterity, as mere animals without a Right or Will! It is, in fine, the most base and humiliating idea that ever degraded the human species, and which, for the honour of Humanity, should be destroyed for ever.

The idea of hereditary succession is so contrary to the Rights of Man, that if we were ourselves to be recalled to existence, instead of being replaced by our posterity, we should not have the right of depriving ourselves beforehand of those *Rights* which would then properly belong to us. On what ground, then, or by what authority, do we dare to deprive of their rights those children who will soon be men? Why are we not struck with the injustice which we perpetrate on our descendants, by endeavouring to transmit them as a vile herd, to masters whose vices are all that can be foreseen?

Whenever the *French* Constitution shall be rendered conformable to its *Declaration of Rights*, we shall then be enabled to give to FRANCE, and with justice, the appellation of a *civic Empire*; for its government will be the empire of Laws founded on the great republican principles of *Elective Representation*, and the *Rights of Man*.—But Monarchy and Hereditary Succession are incompatible with the *basis* of its constitution.

I hope that I have at present sufficiently proved to you that I am a good republican; and I have

such a confidence in the truth of these principles, that I doubt not they will soon be as universal in *France* as in *America*. The pride of human nature will assist their evidence, will contribute to their establishment, and Men will be ashamed of Monarchy.

I am, with respect,

Gentlemen,

Your friend,

THOMAS PAINE.

LETTER

L E T T E R
TO THE
A B B E S Y E Y E S.

Paris, 8th July, 1791.

SIR,

“AT the moment of my departure for England, I read, in the *Moniteur* of Tuesday last, your letter, in which you give the challenge, on the subject of Government, and offer to defend what is called the *Monarchical opinion* against the Republican system.

“I accept of your challenge with pleasure; and I place such a confidence in the superiority of the Republican System over that nullity of system, called *Monarchy*, that I engage not to exceed the extent of fifty pages, and to leave you the liberty of taking as much latitude as you may think proper.

“The respect which I bear your moral and literary reputation, will be your security for my candour in the course of this discussion; but, notwithstanding that I shall treat the subject seriously and sincerely, let me premise, that I consider myself at liberty to ridicule, as they deserve, Monarchical absurdities, whenever the occasion shall present itself.

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“ By republicanisim, I do not understand what the name signifies in Holland, and in some parts of Italy. I understand simply a government by representation—a government founded upon the principles of the Declaration of Rights; principles to which several parts of the French Constitution arise in contradiction. The Declarations of the Rights of France and America are but one and the same thing in principles, and almost in expressions; and this is the Republicanism which I undertake to defend against what is called *Monarchy* and *Aristocracy*.

“ I see with pleasure, that in respect to one point, we are already agreed; and *that is the extreme danger of a Civil List of thirty millions*. I can discover no reason why one of the parts of the government should be supported with so extravagant a profusion, whilst the other scarcely receives what is sufficient for its common wants.

“ This dangerous and dishonourable disproportion at once supplies the one with the means of corrupting, and throws the other into the predicament of being corrupted. In America there is but little difference, with regard to this point, between the legislative and the executive part of our government; but the first is much better attended to than it is in France *.

* A Deputy to the Congress receives about a guinea and a half daily; and provisions are cheaper in America than in France.

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“ In whatsoever manner, Sir, I may treat the subject of which you have proposed the investigation, I hope that you will not doubt my entertaining for you the highest esteem. I must also add, that I am not the personal enemy of Kings. Quite the contrary. No man more heartily wishes than myself to see them all in the happy and honourable state of private individuals; but I am the avowed, open, and intrepid enemy of what is called Monarchy; and I am such by principles which nothing can either alter or corrupt—by my attachment to humanity; by the anxiety which I feel within myself for the dignity and the honour of the human race; by the disgust which I experience, when I observed men directed by children, and governed by brutes; by the horror which all the evils that Monarchy has spread over the earth excite within my breast; and by those sentiments which make me shudder at the calamities, the exactions, the wars, and the massacres with which Monarchy has crushed mankind: in short, it is against all the Hell of Monarchy that I have declared war.

(Signed) THOMAS PAINE.”

F I N I S.